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FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8495
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
RUEHAO/AMCONSUL CURACAO 1053
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1558
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 1441
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0149
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARAMARIBO 000415

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SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR WHA/CAR LLUFTIG, INL, L/LEI, WHA/PD
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
CARACAS FOR LEGAAT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAO](#) [NS](#)

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF SURINAMESE PRESS COVERAGE OF ROGER KHAN
ARREST WEEK II

Ref: Paramaribo 411

PARAMARIBO 00000415 001.2 OF 002

¶1. The deportation of Roger Khan from Suriname and speculation of possible U.S. involvement dominated the news on Thursday and Friday (June 29-30). (See Reftel). All electronic media and print covered the story extensively. Radio and TV broadcasts focused on a chaotic parliamentary meeting Thursday, during which President Venetiaan officially announced the deportation amidst uproar by opposition members eager to believe allegations that U.S. agents surreptitiously kidnapped Khan from prison.

¶2. In the Friday edition of the De Ware Tijd (DWT), a major local newspaper with the largest circulation, four of the six front-page stories covered the Khan story. In its feature article, DWT reported that a Surinamese police investigation into Khan's criminal network would continue, and speculated that deportation would cause fighting among Guyanese criminal organizations on Surinamese territory. This view was sparked in part by allegations that a member of a rival criminal organization tipped off police as to Khan's whereabouts, leading to his arrest. The article said the recent discovery by police in Nickerie of a dead Guyanese man was the first victim in this war.

¶3. In another article, DWT featured statements from the Office of Attorney General (AG), saying that the chief of the local police bureau ordered the deportation of Khan to Guyana, as he was a danger to public order and security. The article continued with a factual chronology of events associated with the deportation; that Khan was escorted from prison to the Johan Adolf Pangal International Airport by members of the police Arrest Team (A-Team) and put on board a Surinam Airways flight (SLM) to Port of Spain for onward transit to Guyana. Khan was under the guard of three Surinamese police officers, according to the AG. DWT reported that U.S. judicial officials were waiting for Khan at the airport in Trinidad and that Roger Khan would appear in the eastern District Court in Brooklyn, New York for an initial hearing on Friday.

¶4. Among DWT's Friday edition articles on Khan was one that

captured the views of Gerold Sewcharan, one of Khan's two Surinamese lawyers, quoting his allegation that his client was "kidnapped" by the Surinamese judicial authorities and transported to Trinidad and Tobago. Sewcharan told the newspaper that he had sent two letters to the AG demanding clarification because regular legal procedures were not followed.

¶ 15. Newspapers De West, The Times, Dagblad Suriname, along with DWT focused front page stories on Thursday's raucous parliamentary session that had President Venetiaan on the defensive after coalition partner Ronnie Brunswijk claimed Khan was whisked away by U.S. security agents from his prison cell for transport to Trinidad and Tobago. Brunswijk cited "reliable sources." Opposition members demanded to know whether Brunswijk's statements were true, after which shouting and chaos broke out, resulting in two opposition members being forcibly removed from the session by armed bailiffs. However, one source pointed out that Khan was far too dangerous a person to remain in Suriname and removing him was essential to maintaining law and order. The source noted that Khan was known to "remove" people he perceived as obstacles if he couldn't first buy them off.

¶ 16. Four of Suriname's major radio stations have provided constant coverage over the past two days, with hourly updates and also going live when necessary. On Friday mid-day, journalists conducted a live-radio broadcast interview with a clearly angry Justice Minister Chandrikaparsad Sanotkhi. Santokhi, who had been absent on travel to French Guiana on June 29, returned vehemently denying all rumors that U.S. officials were involved in the deportation of Khan, saying "we don't need Americans to transport a suspect from prison to the airport." Santhoki defended Khan's routing through Trinidad, saying it was the safest route and challenged journalists and others to first check

PARAMARIBO 00000415 002.2 OF 002

their facts before coming to false conclusions. He said journalists could have easily spoken with Surinam Airways or the prison where Khan was held to corroborate the facts. In an attempt to squash all rumormongering, he said plainly "that Khan was a threat to security to Suriname and was thus deported by Suriname, end of story."

¶ 17. All major local television news broadcasts (STVS, ATV, Guruda, RBN, and Apintie) also covered the Khan situation, reporting on official statements from the government as well as rumors of U.S. involvement. Coverage focused mainly on the spectacle in the National Assembly and the forced removal of its two members.

BARNES